

THE
P R O G R E S S
OF
D U L N E S S,
OR THE
R A R E A D V E N T U R E S
OF
T O M B R A I N L E S S.

By the celebrated author of Mc. FINGAL.

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P R E F A C E.

“**P**RAY what does the author mean?” is the first question most readers will ask, and the last they are able to answer. Therefore in a word I will explain the subject and design of the following poem.

The subject is the state of the times in regard to literature and religion. The author was prompted to write by a hope that it might be of use to point out, in a clear, concise, and striking manner, those general errors, that hinder the advantages of education, and the growth of piety. The subject is inexhaustible; nor is my design yet completed. This first part describes the principal mistakes in one course of life, and exemplifies the following well known truth, That to the frequent scandal, as well of religion, as learning, a fellow, without any share of genius, or application to study, may pass with credit thro’ life, receive the honours of a liberal education, and be admitted to the right hand of fellowship among ministers of the gospel. That, except in one neighbouring province, ignorance wanders unmolested at our colleges, examinations are dwindled to meer form and ceremony, and after four years

dozing there, no one is ever refused the honours, of a degree, on account of dulness and insufficiency. That the meèr knowledge of ancient languages, of the abstruser parts of mathematics, and the dark researches of metaphysics, is of little advantage in business or profession in life. That it would be more beneficial, in every place of public education, to take pains in teaching the elements of oratory, the grammar of the English tongue, and the elegancies of style, and composition. That in numberless instances throughout these colonies, sufficient care hath not been taken to exclude the ignorant and irreligious, from the sacred desk. That this tenderness to the undeserving, tends to debase the dignity of the clergy, and to hinder many worthy men from undertaking the office of the ministry. And that the virulent controversies of the present day concerning religious, or in many cases, merely speculative opinions, savouring so highly of vanity and ostentation, and breathing a spirit so opposite to christian benevolence, have done more hurt to the cause of religion, than all the malice, the ridicule, and the folly of its enemies.



THE PROGRESS OF
DULNESS.

PART FIRST.

[What Tom's father and mother said of him ; how he went to college, and what he learned there ; how he took his degree, and went to keeping school ; how afterwards he became a great man and wore a wig ; and how any body else may do the same.]

“OUR TOM has grown a sturdy boy ;
His progress fills my heart with joy ;
A steady soul that yields to rule,
And quite ingenious too, at school.
Our master says, I'm sure he's right,
There's not a lad in town so bright.
He'll cypher bravely, write and read,
And say his catechism and creed,
And scorns to hesitate or falter
In primer, spelling book or psalter.
Hard work indeed, he does not love it ;
His genius is too much above it.
Give him a good substantial teacher,
I'll lay he makes a special preacher.
I've lov'd good learning all my life ;
We'll send the lad to college, wife,”

Thus sway'd by fond and sightless passion,
His parents hold a consultation;
If on their couch, or round their fire,
I need not tell, nor you enquire.

The point's agreed; the boy well pleas'd,
From country cares and labour eas'd;
No more to rise by break of day
To drive home cows, or deal out hay;
To work no more in snow or hail,
And blow his fingers o'er the flail,
Or mid the toils of harvest sweat
Beneath the summer's sultry heat,
Serene, he bids the farm, good bye,
And quits the plow without a sigh.
Propitious to their constant friend,
The pow'rs of idleness attend.

So to the priest in form he goes,
Prepar'd to study and to doze.
The parson in his youth before,
Had run the same dull progress o'er;
His sole concern to see with care
His church, and farm in good repair.
His skill in tongues, that once he knew,
Had bid him long, a last adieu;
Away his latin rules had fled,
And greek had vanish'd from his head.

Then view our youth with grammar teasing,
Untaught in meaning, sense or reason;
Of knowledge e'er he gain his fill, he
Must diet long on husks of *Lillie*,
Drudge on for weary months in vain,
By mem'ry's strength, and dint of brain;
From thence to murd'ring Virgil's verse,
And construing Tully into farce,

Or lab'ring with his grave preceptor,
In greek to blunder o'er a chapter.
The latin testament affords
The needed help of ready words ;
At hand the dictionary laid,
Gives up it's page in frequent aid ;
Hard by the lexicon and grammar,
Those helps of mem'ry when they stammer ;
The lesson s short ; the priest contented ;
His task to hear is sooner ended.
He lets him mind his own concerns,
Then tells his parents how he learns.

A year thus spent in gathering knowledge,
The lad sets forth t' unlade at college,
While down his sire and priest attend him,
To introduce and recommend him ;
Or if detain'd a letter's sent
Of much apocryphal content,
To set him forth, how dull soever,
As very learn'd and very clever ;
A genius of the first emission,
With burning love for erudition ;
So studious he'll outwatch the moon
And think the planets set too soon ;
He had but little time to fit in ;
Examination too must frighten :
Depend upon't he must do well,
He knows much more than he can tell ;
Admit him, and in little space
He'll beat his rivals in the race ;
His father's incomes are but small,
He comes now if he comes at all.

So said, so done, at college now
He enters well, no matter how ;

New scenes awhile his fancy please,
 But all must yield to love of ease.
 In the same round condemn'd each day,
 To study, read, recite and pray;
 To make his hours of business double—
 He can't endure the increasing trouble;
 And finds at length, as times grow pressing,
 All plagues are easier than his lesson.
 With sleepy eyes and countenance heavy,
 With much excuse of **non paravi*,
 Much absence, tardes and egresses,
 The college evil on him seizes.
 Then ev'ry book, which ought to please,
 Stirs up the seeds of dire disease;
 Greek spoils his eyes, the print's so fine,
 Grown dim with study, and with wine;
 Of Tully's latin much afraid,
 Each page, he calls the doctor's aid;
 While geometry, with lines so crooked,
 Sprains all his wits to overlook it.
 His sickness puts on every name,
 It's cause and uses still the same;
 'Tis tooth ach, cholick, gout or stone,
 With phases various as the moon,
 But tho' thro' all the body spread,
 Still makes its cap'tal seat, the head.
 In all diseases, 'tis expected,
 The weakest parts be most infected.

Kind headach hail! thou blest disease,
 The friend of idleness and ease;
 Who mid the still and dreary bound
 Where college walls her sons surround,

** Non paravi, I have not prepared for recitation. An excuse commonly given.*

PROGRESS OF DULNESS.

9

In spite of fears, in justice' spight,
Assum'st o'er laws dispensing right,
Set'st from his task the blunderer free,
Excus'd by dulness and by thee.

Thy vot'ries bid a bold defiance
To all the calls and threats of science,
Slight learning human and divine,
And hear no prayers, and fear no fine.

And yet how oft the studious gain,
The dulness of a letter'd brain ;
Despising such low things the while
As English grammar, phrase and style ;
Despising ev'ry nicer art,
That aids the tongue, or mends the heart ;
Read ancient authors o'er in vain,
Nor taste one beauty they contain ;
Humbly on trust accept the sense,
But deal for words at vast expence ;
Search well how every term must vary
From lexicon to dictionary ;
And plodding on in one dull tone,
Gain ancient tongues and lose their own,
Bid every graceful charm defiance,
And woo the skeleton of science.

Come ye, who finer arts despise,
And scoff at verse as heathen lies ;
In all the pride of dulness rage
At Pope, or Milton's deathless page ;
Or stung by truth's deep searching line,
Rave ev'n at rhymes as low as mine ;
Say ye who boast the name of wise
Wherein substantial learning lies.
Is it, superb in classic lore,
To speak what Homer spoke before,

To write the language Tully wrote,
 The style, the cadence and the note?
 Is there a charm in sounds of greek,
 No language else can learn to speak;
 That cures distemper'd brains at once,
 Like Pliny's rhymes for broken bones?
 Is there a spirit found in latin,
 That must evaporate in translating?
 And say are sense and genius bound
 To any vehicles of sound?
 Is it by mathematic's aid
 To count the world's in light array'd,
 To know each star, that lifts it's eye,
 To sparkle in the midnight sky?
 Say ye, who draw the curious line
 Between the useful and the fine,
 How little can this noble art
 Its aid in human things impart,
 Or give to life a cheerful ray,
 And force our pains, and cares away.

Is it to know whate'er was done
 Above the circle of the sun?
 Is it to lift the active mind
 Beyond the bounds by heaven assign'd;
 And leave our little world at home,
 Through realms of entity to roam;
 Attempt the secrets dark to scan,
 Eternal wisdom hid from man;
 For sense, deal loads of definitions,
 And fritter truth in subdivisions,
 And make religion but the sign
 In din of battle when to join?
 Vain man to madness still a prey,
 Thy space a point, thy life a day,

A feeble worm that aim'st to stride
In all the foppery of pride !
The glimmering lamp of reason's ray
Was given to guide thy darksome way.
Why wilt thou spread thy insect wings,
And strive to reach sublimer things ;
Thy doubts confess, thy blindness own,
Nor vex thy thoughts with scenes unknown.
Indulgent heaven to man below,
Hath all explain'd we need to know ;
Hath clearly taught enough to prove
Content below, and bliss above.
Thy boastful wish how proud and vain,
While heaven forbids the vaunting strain !
For metaphysics rightly shown
But teach how little can be known ;
Though quibbles still maintain their station,
Conjecture serves for demonstration,
Armies of pens draw forth to fight,
And **** and **** write.

Oh ! might I live to see that day,
When sense shall point to youths their way ;
Through every maze of science guide ;
O'er education's laws preside ;
The good retain with just discerning
Explode the quackeries of learning ;
Give ancient arts their real due,
Explain their faults, and beauties too ;
Teach where to imitate, and mend,
And point their uses and their end.
Then bright philosophy would shine,
And ethics teach the laws divine ;
Our youths might learn each nobler art,
That shews a passage to the heart ;

From ancient languages well known
 Transfuse new beauties to our own ;
 With taste and fancy well refin'd,
 Where moral rapture warms the mind,
 From schools dismiss'd, with lib'ral hand,
 Spread useful learning o'er the land ;
 And bid the eastern world admire
 Our rising worth, and bright'ning fire.

But while through fancy's realms we roam,
 The main concern is left at home ;
 Return'd, our hero still we find
 The same, as blundering and as blind.
 Four years at college doz'd away
 In sleep, and slothfulness and play,
 Too dull for vice, with clearest conscience,
 Charg'd with no fault but that of nonsense,
 And nonsense long, with serious air
 Has wander'd unmolested there,
 He passes trial fair, and free,
 And takes in form his first degree.

A scholar see him now commence
 Without the aid of books or sense ;
 For passing college cures the brain,
 Like mills to grind men young again.
 The scholar-dress, that once array'd him,
 The charm, * *Admitto te ad gradum*,
 With touch of parchment can refine,
 And make the veriest coxcomb shine,
 Confer the gift of tongues at once,
 And fill with sense the vacant dunce.

* *Admitto te ad gradum*, I admit you to a degree ; part of the words used in conferring the honours of college.

So kingly crowns contain quintessence
Of worship, dignity and presence ;
Give learning, genius, virtue, worth,
Wit, valor, wisdom and so forth ;
Hide the bald pate, and cover o'er
The cap of folly worn before.

Our hero's wit and learning now may
Be prov'd by token of Diploma,
Of that Diploma, which with speed
He learns to construe and to read ;
And stalks abroad with conscious stride,
In all the airs of pedant pride,
With passport sign'd for wit and knowledge,
And current under seal of college.

Few months now past, he sees with pain
His purse as empty as his brain ;
His father leaves him then to fate,
And throws him off, as useless weight ;
But gives him good advice to teach
A school at first and then to preach.

Thou reason'st well ; it must be so ;
For nothing else thy son can do.
As thieves of old to avoid the halter
Took refuge in the holy altar ;
Oft dulness flying from disgrace
Finds safety in that sacred place ;
There boldly rears his head, or rests
Secure from ridicule or jests ;
Where dreaded satire may not dare
Offend his wig's extremest hair ;
Where scripture sanctifies his strains,
And reverence hides the want of brains,

Next see our youth at school appear,
Procur'd for forty pounds a year,
His ragged regiment round assemble,
Taught, not to read, but fear and tremble.
Before him, rods prepare his way,
Those dreaded antedotes to play.
Then thron'd aloft in elbow chair,
With solemn face and awful air,
He tries, with ease and unconcern,
To teach what ne'er himself could learn ;
Gives laws and punishment alone,
Judge, jury, bailiff, all in one ;
Holds all good learning must depend
Upon his rod's extremest end,
Whose great electric virtue's such,
Each genius brightens at the touch ;
With threats and blows, incitements pressing,
Drives on his lads to learn each lesson ;
Thinks flogging cures all moral ills,
And breaks their heads to break their wills.

The year is done ; he takes his leave ;
The children smile ; the parents grieve ;
And seek again, their school to keep,
One just as good and just as cheap.

Now to some priest, that's fam'd for teaching, -
He goes to learn the art of preaching ;
And settles down with earnest zeal
Sermons to study, and to steal.
Six months from all the world retires
To kindle up his cover'd fires ;
Learns with nice art, to make with ease
The scriptures speak whate'er he please ;

With judgment unperceiv'd to quote
What Pool explain'd, or Henry wrote ;
To give the gospel new editions,
Split doctrines into propositions,
Draw motives, uses, inferences,
And torture words in thousand senses ?
Learn the grave style and goodly phrase,
Safe handed down from Cromwell's days,
And shun with anxious care, the while
The infection of a modern style ;
Or on the wings of folly fly
Aloft in metaphysic sky ;
The system of the world explain,
Till night and chaos come again ;
Deride what old divines can say,
Point out to heaven a nearer way ;
Explode all known establish'd rules,
Affirm our fathers all were fools.
The present age is growing wise,
But wisdom in her cradle lies ;
Late, like minerva, born and bred,
Not from a Jove's, but scribler's head,
While thousand youths their homage lend her,
And nursing fathers rock and tend her.

Round him much manuscript is spread,
Extracts from living works, and dead,
Themes, sermons, plans of controversy,
That hack and mangle without mercy,
And whence to glad the reader's eyes,
The future dialogue shall rise.

At length matur'd the grand design,
He stalks abroad, a grave divine.

Mean while, from every distant seat
At stated time the clergy meet.
Our hero comes, his sermon reads,
Explains the doctrine of his creeds,
A licence gains to preach and pray,
And makes his bow and goes his way.

What tho' his wits could ne'er dispense
One page of grammar, or of sense ;
What though his learning be so slight,
He scarcely knows to spell or write ;
What though his skull be cudgel proof !
He's orthodox, and that's enough.

Perhaps with genius we'd dispense ;
But sure we look at least for sense.

Ye fathers of our church attend
The serious counsels of a friend,
Whose utmost wish, in nobler ways,
Your sacred dignity to raise.
Tho' blunt the style, the truths set down
Ye can't deny—though some may frown.

Yes, there are men, nor these a few,
The foes of virtue and of you ;
Who, nurtur'd long in dulness' school,
Make vice their trade, and sin by rule,
Who deem it courage heav'n to brave,
And wit, to scoff at all that's grave ;
Vent stolen jests, with strange grimaces,
From folly's book of common places ;
While mid the simple throng around
Each kindred blockhead greets the sound,
And, like electric fire, at once,
The laugh is caught from dunce to dunce.

The deist's scoffs ye may despise ;
Within yourselves your danger lies ;
For who would wish, neglecting rule,
To aid the triumphs of a fool ?
From heav'n at first your order came,
From heav'n receiv'd its sacred name,
Indulg'd to man, to point the way,
That leads from darkness up to day,
Your highborn dignity attend,
And view your origin and end.

While human souls are all your care,
By warnings, counsels, preaching, prayer,
In bands of christian friendship join'd,
Where pure affection warms the mind,
While each performs the pious race,
Nor dulness e'er usurps a place ;
No vice shall brave your awful test,
Nor folly dare to broach the jest,
Each waiting eye shall humbly bend,
And rev'rence on your steps attend.

But when each point of serious weight,
Is torn with wrangling and debate,
When truth, mid rage of dire divisions,
Is left to fight for definitions,
And fools assume your sacred place,
It threatens your order with disgrace ;
Bids genius from your seats withdraw,
And seek the pert loquacious law ;
Or deign in physic's path's to rank,
With every quack and mountebank ;
Or in the ways of trade content,
Plod ledgers o'er of cent. per cent.

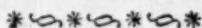
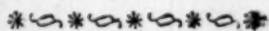
While in your seats so sacred, whence
We look for piety and sense,
Pert dulness raves in school boy style;
Your friends must blush, your foes will smile,
While men, who teach the glorious way,
Where heaven unfolds celestial day,
Assume the task sublime, to bring
The message of th' eternal king,
Disgrace those honours they receive,
And want that sense they aim to give.

Now in the desk with solemn air,
Our hero makes his audience stare;
Asserts with all dogmatic boldness,
Where impudence is yok'd to dulness;
Reads o'er his notes with halting pace,
Mask'd in the stiffness of his face;
With gestures such as might become
Those statues once that spoke at Rome,
Or Livy's ox, that to the state
Declar'd the oracles of fate,
In awkward tones, nor said, nor sung,
Slow rumbling o'er the faltring tongue,
Two hours his drawling speech holds on,
And names it preaching when he's done.

With roving tir'd, he fixes down
For life, in some unsettled town.
People and priest full well agree,
For why—they know no more than he.
Vast tracts of unknown lands he gains,
Better than those the moon contains;
There deals in preaching and in prayer,
And starves on sixty pounds a year,

And culls his texts, and tills his farm,
 And does no good, and little harm ;
 On Sunday, in his best array,
 Deals forth the dulness of the day ;
 And while above he spends his breath,
 The yawning audience nod beneath.

Thus glib tongu'd Merc'ry in his hand
 Stretch'd forth the sleep compelling wand,
 Each eye in endless doze to keep—
 The God of sleeping, and of sleep.



THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

BY [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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THE PROGRESS OF
DULNESS.

PART SECOND.

OR AN

E S S A Y

ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF
DICK HAIRBRAIN

OF FINICAL MEMORY.

[*Dick's soliloquy on a college life ; a description of a Country Fop ; receipt to make a gentleman, with the Fop's Creed and exposition of the scriptures ; Dick's gradual progress from a clown to a coxcomb ; his travels, gallantry, and opinion of the ladies ; his Peripatetic and Catastrophe, with the moral and application of the whole.*]

'T WAS in a town remote, the place
We leave the reader wise to guess ;
For readers wise can guess full well,
What authors never meant to tell,
There dwelt secure a country clown,
The wealthiest farmer of the town ;
Though rich by villany and cheats,
He bought respect by frequent treats ;
Gain'd offices by constant seeking,
Squire, captain, deputy and deacon ;
Great was his power ; his pride as arrant ;
One only son his heir apparent.

He thought the stripling's parts were quick,
And vow'd to make a man of Dick ;
Bless'd the pert dunce, and prais'd his looks,
And put him early to his books.

More oaths than words Dick learn'd to speak
And studied knav'ry more than greek ;
Three years at school, as usual, spent,
Then all equipt to college went,
And pleas'd in prospect, thus bestow'd:
His meditations, as he rode.

“ All hail, unvex'd with care and strife,
The bliss of academic life ;
Where kind repose protracts the span,
While childhood ripens into man ;
Where no hard parent's dreaded rage
Curbs the gay sports of youthful age ;
Where no vile fear the genius awes
With grim severity of laws ;
Where annual troops of bucks come down,
The flower of every neighb'ring town ;
Where wealth and pride and riot wait,
And every rogue may find his mate.

Far from those walls, from pleasure's eye,
Let care and grief and labour fly,
The toil to gain the laurel prize,
That dims the anxious student's eyes,
The pedant air of learned looks,
And long fatigue of turning books.
Let poor, dull rogues, with weary pains,
To college come to mend their brains,
And drudge four years, with grave concern,
How they may wiser grow and learn.

Is wealth of indolence afraid,
Or does wit need pedantic aid?
The man of wealth the world describes,
Without the help of learning, wise;
The magic powers of gold, with ease,
Transform us to what shape we please,
Give knowledge bright and courage brave,
And wits, that nature never gave.
But nought avails the hoarded treasure;
In spending only lies the pleasure.

There vice shall lavish all her charms,
And rapture fold us in her arms,
Riot shall court the frolic soul,
And swearing crown the sparkling bowl;
While wit shall sport with vast applause,
And scorn the feeble tie of laws;
Our midnight joys no rule shall bound,
While games and dalliance revel round.
Such pleasures youthful years can know,
And schools there are, that such bestow.

And oh, that school how greatly blest,
By fate distinguish'd from the rest,
Whose seat is fix'd on sacred ground,
By Venus' nunn'ries circled round;
Where not like monks, in durance hard,
From all the joys of love debarr'd,
The solitary youth in pain
For rapture sighs, yet sighs in vain;
But kind occasion prompts desire
And crowns the gay, licentious fire,
And pleasure courts the sons of science,
And whores and muses hold alliance.

Not those* so blest, for ease and sport,
Where wealth and idleness resort,
Where free from censure and from shame,
They seek of learning, but the name,
Their crimes of all degrees and sizes
Aton'd by golden sacrifices ;
Where kind instructors fix their price,
In just degrees on every vice,
And fierce in zeal 'gainst wicked courses,
Demand repentance, of their purses ;
Till sin, thus tax'd, produces clear
A copious income every year,
And the fair schools thus free from scruples,
Thrive by the knav'ry of their pupils.

Ev'n thus the Pope, long since has made
Of human crimes a gainful trade ;
Keeps ev'ry pleasing vice for sale,
For cash, by wholesale, or retail.
There, pay the prices and the fees,
Buy rapes, or lies, or what you please,
Then sin secure, with firm reliance,
And bid the ten commands defiance.

And yet, alas, these happiest schools
Preserve a set of musty rules,
And in their wisest progress show
Perfection is not found below.

* " *There is a certain region on the western continent, situated within the northern temperate zone where in some of the most notable and respectable schools, not only indolence and dulness, but almost every crime, may by the rich be atoned for with pecuniary satisfaction.*" *Dudon's geographical paradoxes.* No. 45.

Even there, indulg'd, in humble station,
Learning resides by toleration ;
No law forbids the youth to read ;
For sense, no tortures are decreed ;
There study injures but the name,
And meets no punishment but shame".

Thus reas'ning, Dick goes forth to find
A college suited to his mind ;
But bred in distant woods, the clown
Brings all his country airs to town ;
The odd address with awkward grace,
That bows with all averted face ;
The half heard compliments, whose note
Is swallow'd in the trembling throat ;
The stiffen'd gait, the drawling tone,
By which his native place is known ;
The blush, that looks, by vast degrees,
Too much like modesty to please ;
The proud displays of awkward drefs,
That all the country fop exprefs,
The suit right gay, tho' much belated,
Whose fashion's superannuated ;
The watch, depending far in state,
Whose iron chain might form a grate ;
The silver buckle, dread to view,
O'ershad'wing all the clumsy shoe ;
The white-glov'd hand, that tries to peep
From ruffle, full five inches deep ;
With fifty odd affairs beside,
The foppishness of country pride.

Poor Dick ! tho' first thy airs provoke
Th' obstreperous laugh and scornful joke,

Doom'd all the ridicule to stand,
While each gay dunce shall lend a hand;
Yet let not scorn dismay thy hope
To shine a witling and a fop.
Blest impudence the prize shall gain,
And bid thee sigh no more in vain.
Thy varied dress shall quickly show
At once the spendthrift and the beau.
With pert address and noisy tongue,
That scorns the fear of prating wrong,
'Mongst listning coxcombs shalt thou shine,
And every voice shall echo thine.
As when, disjointed from the stock,
We view with scorn the shapeless block,
The skilful statuary hews us,
The wood in any form he chuses;
So shall the arts of fops in town,
From thee smooth off the rugged clown,
The rubbish of thy mein shall clear,
Till all the beau in pomp appear.

How blest the brainless fop, whose praise
Is doom'd to grace these happy days,
When well bred vice can genius teach,
And fame is plac'd in folly's reach,
Impertinence all tastes can hit,
And every rascal is a wit.
The lowest dunce, without despairing,
May learn the true sublime of swearing,
Learn the nice art of jests obscene,
While ladies wonder what they mean,
The heroism of brazen lungs,
The rhetoric of eternal tongues;
While whim usurps the name of spirit,
And impudence takes place of merit,

And every money'd clown and dunce
Commences gentleman at once.

For now, by easy rules of trade,
Mechanic gentlemen are made !
From handicrafts of fashion born ;
Those very arts so much their scorn.
To taylor's half themselves they owe,
Who make the clothes, that make the beau.

Lo ! from the seats, where, fops to blefs,
Learn'd artists fix the forms of dress,
And sit in consultation grave,
On folded skirt, of straitned sleeve,
The coxcomb trips with sprightly haste,
In all the flush of modern taste ;
Oft turning, if the day be fair,
To view his shadow's graceful air ;
Well pleas'd with eager eye runs o'er
The lac'd suit glittering gay before ;
The ruffle, where from open'd vest
The rubied brooch adorns the breast ;
The coat with length'ning waist behind,
Whose short skirts dangle in the wind ;
The modish hat, whose breadth contains
The measure of its owner's brains ;
The stockings gay with silken hues ;
The little toe encircling shoes ;
The cane, on whose carv'd top is shown
An head just emblem of his own ;
While wrapt in self, with lofty stride,
His little heart elate with pride,
He struts in all the joys of show,
That taylor's give, or beaus can know,

And who for beauty need repine,
That's fold at every barber's sign ;
Nor lies in features or complexion,
But curls dispos'd in meet direction,
With strong pomatum's grateful odour,
And *quantum sufficit* of powder ?
These charms can shed a sprightly grace,
O'er the dull eye and clumsy face ;
While the trim dancing master's art
Shall gestures, trips and bows impart,
Give the gay piece its final touches,
And lend those airs, would lure a Duchess.

Thus shines the form, nor aught behind,
The gifts that deck the coxcomb's mind ;
'Then hear the daring muse disclose
The sense and piety of beaus.

To grace his speech, let France bestow
A set of compliments for show ;
Land of politeness ! that affords
The treasure of newfangled words,
And endless quantities disbursts
Of bows and compliments and curses ;
The soft address, with airs so sweet,
That cringes at the ladies' feet ;
The pert, vivacious, play house style,
That wakes the gay assembly's smile ;
Jests that his brother beaus may list,
And pass with young coquettes for wit,
And, priz'd by fops of true discerning,
Outface the pedantry of learning.
Yet learning too shall lend its aid,
To fill the coxcomb's spongy head,

And studious oft he shall peruse
The labours of the modern muse.
From endless loads of novels gain
Soft, simpring tales of am'rous pain,
With double meanings, neat and handy,
From Rochester and Tristram Shandy.
The blundring aid of weak reviews,
That forge the fetters of the muse,
Shall give him airs of criticizing
On faults of books, he ne'er sets eyes on.
The magazines shall teach the fashion,
And common place of conversation,
And where his knowledge fails, afford
The aid of many a sounding word.

Then least religion he should need,
Of pious *Hume he'll learn his creed,
By strongest demonstration shown,
Evince that nothing can be known ;
Take arguments unvex'd by doubt,
On Voltaire's trust, or go without ;
'Gainst scripture rail in modern lore,
As thousand fools have rail'd before ;

C 2

* *Hume, Voltaire and Bolingbroke are three of the most noted deistical writers, whose admirers are more numerous, even in America, than perhaps many of our honest country readers may imagine. It will be easily discerned, that my design was to draw a complete character of a first rate Coxcomb, and not to confine myself merely to the inferior, second handed, imitative beaux of this country, among whom, though we can boast of some promising geniuses, yet soppery seems to be but just cleverly dawning.*

Or pleas'd a nicer art display
T' expound its doctrines all away,
Suit it to modern tastes and fashions
By various notes and emendations ;
The rules the ten commands contain,
With new provisos well explain ;
Prove all religion was but fashion,
Beneath the Jewish dispensation,
A ceremonious law, deep hooded
In types and figures long exploded ;
Its stubborn fetters all unfit
For these free times of gospel light,
This rake's Millenium, since the day
When sabbaths first were done away ?
Since shame, the worst of deadly fiends,
On virtue, as its squire attends ;
Since Pandar-conscience holds the door,
And lewdness is a vice no more ;
And fools may swift as crimes convey 'em,
Flee to their place, and no man stay 'em.

Alike his poignant wit displays
The darkness of the former days,
When men the paths of duty sought,
And own'd what revelation taught ;
Ere human reason grew so bright,
Men could see all things by its light,
And summon'd scripture to appear,
And stand before its bar severe,
To clear its page from charge of fiction,
And answer pleas of contradiction ;
Ere myst'ries first were held in scorn,
Or Bolingbroke, or Hume were born.

And now the fop, with great energy,
 Levels at priestcraft and the clergy,
 At holy cant and godly prayers,
 And bigot's hypocritic airs ;
 Musters each vet'ran jest to aid,
 Calls piety the parson's trade ;
 Cries out 'tis shame, past all abiding,
 The world should still be so priest ridden ;
 Applauds free thought that scorns controul,
 And gen'rous nobleness of soul,
 That acts its pleasure good or evil,
 And fears nor deity, nor devil.
 These standing topics never fail
 To prompt our little wits to rail,
 With mimic droll'ry of grimace,
 And pleas'd impertinence of face,
 'Gainst virtue arm their feeble forces,
 And sound the charge in peals of curses.

Blest be his ashes ! under ground
 If any particles be found,
 Who friendly to the coxcomb race,
 First taught those arts of common place,
 Those topics fine, on which the beau
 May all his little wits bestow,
 Secure the simple laugh to raise,
 And gain the dunce's palm of praise.
 For where's the theme that beaus could hit
 With least similitude of wit,
 Did not religion and the priest
 Supply materials for the jest ?
 The poor in purse, with metals vile
 For current coins, the world beguile ;
 The poor in brain, for genuine wit
 Pass off a viler counterfeit ;

While various thus their doom appears,
These lose their souls, and those their ears ;
The want of fancy, whim supplies,
And native humour, mad caprice ;
Loud noise for argument goes off,
For mirth polite, the ribald's scoff ;
For sense, lew'd droll'ries entertain us,
And wit is mimick'd by profaneness.

Thus 'twixt the taylor and the player,
And Hume, and Tristram and Voltaire,
Complete in modern trim array'd,
The clockwork gentleman is made ;
As thousand fops ere Dick have shone,
In airs, which Dick ere long shall own.

But not immediate from the clown,
He gains this zenith of renown ;
Slow dawns the coxcomb's op'ning ray ;
Rome was not finish'd in a day.
Perfection is the work of time ;
Gradual he mounts the height sublime ;
First shines abroad with bolder grace,
In suits of second handed lace,
And learns by rote, like studious players,
The fop's infinity of airs ;
Till merit, to full ripeness grown,
By constancy attains the crown.

Now should our tale at large proceed,
Here might I tell, and you might read
At college next how Dick went on,
And prated much and studied none ;
Yet shone with fair, unborrow'd ray,
And steer'd where nature led the way.

What tho' each academic science
Bade all his efforts bold defiance !
What though in algebra his station
Was negative in each equation ;
Though in astronomy survey'd,
His constant course was retrograde ;
O'er Newton's system though he sleeps
And finds his wits in dark eclipse !
His talents prov'd of highest price
At all the arts of cards and dice ;
His genius turn'd, with greatest skill,
To whist, loo, cribbage and quadrille,
And taught, to every rival's shame,
Each nice distinction of the game.

As noonday sun, the case is plain,
Nature has nothing made in vain.
The blind mole cannot fly ; 'tis found
His genius leads him under ground ;
The man, that was not made to think,
Was born to game, and swear, and drink ;
Let fops defiance bid to satire,
Mind Tully's rule, and follow nature.

Yet here the muse, of Dick, must tell
He shone in active scenes as well ;
The foremost place in riots held ;
In all the gifts of noise excell'd ;
His tongue, the bell, whose rattling din wou'd
Summon the rake's nocturnal synod ;
Swore with a grace that seem'd design'd
To emulate the infernal kind,
Nor only make their realms his due,
But learn, betimes, their language too ;

And well expert in arts polite,
Drank wine by quarts to mend his sight,
For he that drinks till all things reel,
Sees double, and that's twice as well,
And ere its force confin'd his feet,
Led out his mob to scour the street ;
Made all authority his may game,
And strain'd his little wits to plague 'em,
Then, every crime aton'd with ease,
Pro meritis receiv'd degrees ;
And soon as fortune chanc'd to fall,
His father died and left him all.
Then, bent to gain all modern fashions,
He sail'd to visit foreign nations,
Resolv'd, by toil unaw'd to import,
The follies of the British court ;
But in his course o'erlook'd whate'er
Was learn'd or valu'd, rich or rare.

As fire electric draws together
Each hair and straw and dust and feather,
The travell'd dunce collects betimes
The levities of other climes ;
And when long toil has given success,
Returns his native land to bleis,
A patriot top, that struts by rules,
And Knight of all the shire of fools.

The praise of other learning lost,
To know the world is all his boast,
By conduct teach our country wigeons,
How coxcombs shine in other regions,
Display his travell'd airs and fashions,
And scoff at college educations.

Whoe'er at college points his sneer,
Proves that himself learn'd nothing there,
And wisely makes his honest aim
To pay the mutual debt of shame.

Mean while our hero's anxious care
Was all employ'd to please the fair ;
With vows of love and airs polite,
Oft fighting at some lady's feet ;
Pleas'd, while he thus in form address'd her,
With his own gracefulness of gesture,
And gaudy flattery, that displays
A studied elegance of phrase.
So gay at balls the coxcomb shone,
He thought the female world his own.
By beauty's charms he ne'er was fir'd ;
He flatter'd where the world admir'd.
Himself, so well he priz'd desert,
Possess'd his own unrivall'd heart ;
Nor charms, nor chance, nor change could move
The firm foundations of his love ;
His heart, so constant and so wise,
Pursu'd what sages old advise,
Bade others seek for fame or pelf ;
His only study was himself.

Yet Dick allow'd the fair, desert,
Nor wholly scorn'd them in his heart ;
There was an end, as oft he said,
For which alone the sex were made,
Whereto, of nature's rules observant,
He strove to render them subservient ;
And held the fair by inclination,
Were form'd exactly for their station,

That real virtue ne'er could find
Her lodging in a female mind ;
Quoted from Pope, in phrase so smart,
That all the sex are ' rakes at heart,'
And prais'd Mahomet's sense, who holds
That women ne'er were born with souls.

Thus blest, our hero saw his name
Rank'd in the foremost lists of fame.
What though the learn'd, the good, the wise,
His light, affected airs, despise !
What though the fair of higher mind,
With brighter thought and sense refin'd,
Whose fancy rose on nobler wing,
Scorn'd the vain, gilt, gay, noisy thing !
Each light coquette spread forth her charms,
And lur'd the hero to her arms.
For beaus and light coquettes, by fate
Were each design'd the other's mate,
By instinct love, for each may find
Its likeness in the other's mind ;
Then let the wiser sort desert 'em,
For 'twere a sin to try to part 'em.

Nor did the coxcomb-loving climate
To these alone his praises limit.
Each gayer fop of modern days
Allow'd to Dick the foremost praise,
Borrow'd his style, his airs, grimace,
And aped his modish form of dress.
Even some, with sense endu'd, felt hopes
And rais'd ambition to be fops ;
But men of sense, 'tis fix'd by fate,
Are coxcombs but of second rate.

The pert and lively dunce alone
Can steer the course that Dick has shown ;
The lively dunce alone can climb
The summit, where he shines sublime.

But ah ! how short the fairest name
Stands on the slipp'ry steep of fame !
The noblest heights we're soonest giddy on ;
The sun ne'er stays in his meridian ;
The brightest stars must quickly set ;
And Dick has deeply run in debt.
Now what avails his splendid show,
With all the arts, that grace the Beau !
Not all his oaths can duns dismay,
Or deadly Bailiffs fright away,
Not all his compliments can bail,
Or minuets dance him from the jail.
Law not the least respect can give
To the lac'd coat, or ruff'd sleeve.
Off fly at once, in saddest woe,
The dress and trappings of the Beau ;
His splendid ornaments must fall,
And all is lost, for these were all.

What then remains ? in health's decline,
By lewdness, luxury and wine,
Worn by disease, with purse too shallow,
To lead in fashions, or to follow,
The meteor's gaudy light is gone ;
Lone age with hasty step comes on ;
The charms he once with pride display'd,
All vanish'd into empty shade ;
And only left, in tawdry show,
The superannuated Beau.

How pale the palsied fop appears,
Low shivring in the vale of years ;
The ghost of all his former days,
When folly lent the ear of praise.
And Beaus with pleas'd attention hung
On accents of his chatt'ring tongue.
Now all those days of pleasure o'er,
That chatt'ring tongue must prate no more.
From every place, that bless'd his hopes,
He's elbow'd out by younger fops.
Each pleasing thought unknown, that cheers
The sadness of declining years,
In lonely age he sinks forlorn,
Of all, and even himself, the scorn.
The Coxcomb's course were wondrous clever,
Would health and money last forever,
Did Conscience never break the charm,
Nor fears of future worlds alarm.
But oh, since youth and years decay,
And life's vain follies fleet away,
Since age has no respect for beaus,
And death the gaudy scene must close,
Happy the man, whose early bloom
Provides for endless years to come ;
That learning seeks, whose useful gain
Repays the course of studious pain,
Whose fame the thankful age shall raise,
And future times repeat its praise ;
Attains that heart-felt peace of mind,
To all the will of heaven resign'd,
Which calms in youth, the blast of rage,
Adds sweetest hope to sinking age,
With valued use prolongs the breath,
And gives a placid smile to death.

Then let us scorn the praise that springs
From gaudy, sublunary things.
Hate the vain joys, that vice can claim,
To nobler thoughts exalt our aim,
With ardour seek th'immortal prize,
And seize our portion in the skies.

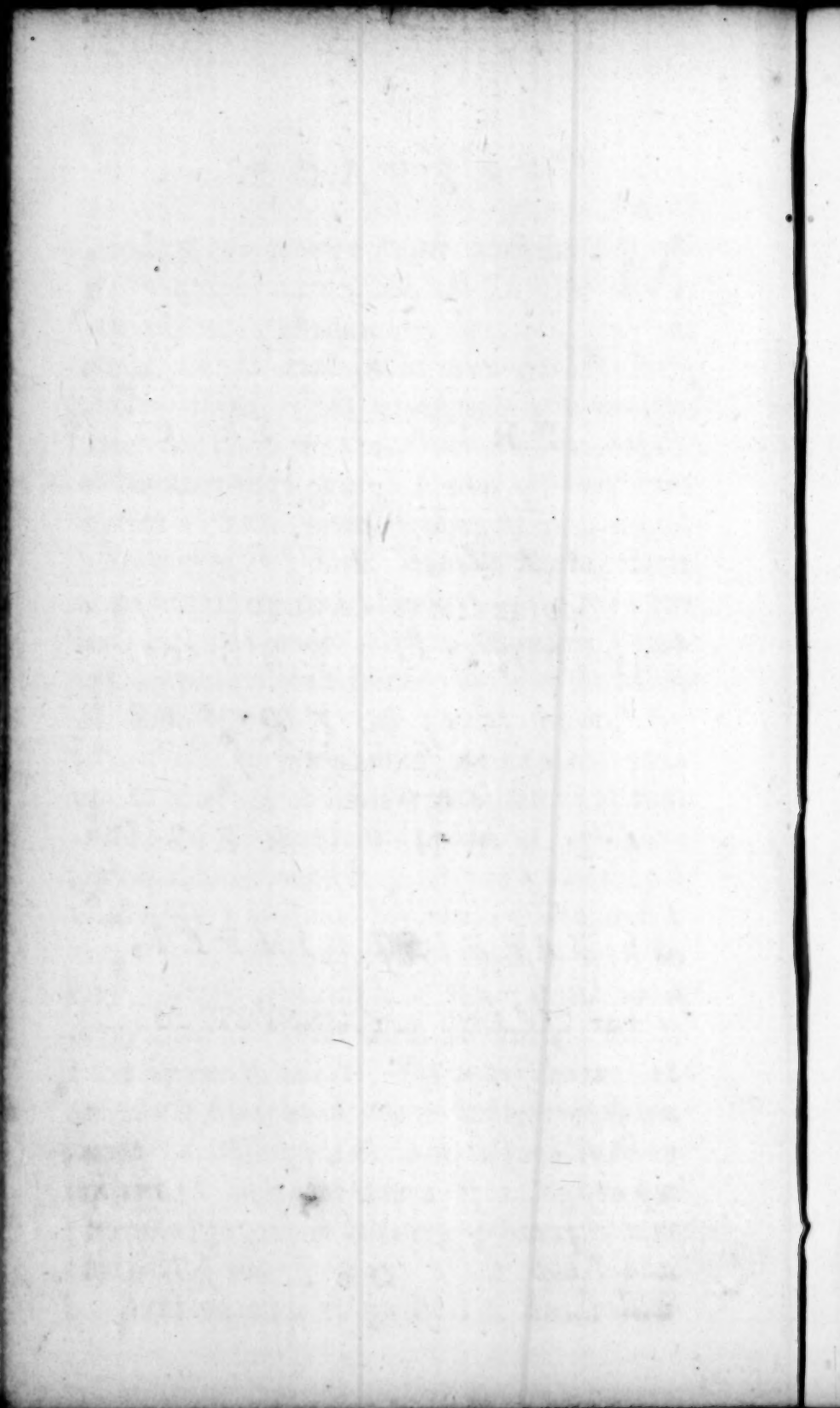


THE PROGRESS OF
DULNESS.

PART THIRD.

SOMETIMES CALLED
THE PROGRESS OF
COQUETRY,

OR THE
ADVENTURES
OF
Miss HARRIET SIMPER,
OF THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT.



P R E F A C E.

MY design in this poem is to show, that all the foibles we discover in the fair sex arise principally from the neglect of their education, and the mistaken notions they imbibe in their early youth. This naturally introduced a description of these foibles, which I have endeavoured to laugh at with good humour, and to expose without malevolence. Had I only consulted my own taste, I would have preferred sense and spirit with a style more elevated and poetical, to a perpetual drollery, and the affectation of wit; but I have found by experience in the second part of this work, that it is not so agreeable to the bulk of my readers. I have endeavoured to avoid unseasonable severity, and hope, in that point, I am pretty clear of censure; especially as some of my good friends in these parts have lately made a discovery, that severity is not my talent, and there is nothing to be feared from the strokes of my satire; a discovery, that on this head hath given me no small consolation. In the following poem, my design is so apparent, that I am not much afraid of general misrepresentation; and I hope there are no grave folks, who will think it trifling or unimportant. I

P R E F A C E.

expect however, from the treatment I have already received in regard to the former parts of this work, as well as some later and more fugitive productions, that my designs will by many be ignorantly or wilfully misunderstood. I shall rest satisfied with the consciousness that a desire to promote the interests of learning and morality was the principal motive, that influenced me in these writings; judging as I did, that unless I attempted something in this way, that might conduce to the service of mankind, I had spent much time in the studies of the Muses in vain.

Polite literature hath within a few years made very considerable advances in America. Mankind in general seem sensible of the importance and advantages of learning. Female education hath been most neglected; and I wish this small performance may have some tendency to encourage and promote it.

The sprightliness of female genius, and the excellence of that sex in their proper walks of science are by no means inferior to the accomplishments of men. And although the course of their education ought to be different, and writing is not so pecu-

P R E F A C E.

*tiarly the business of the sex, yet I cannot
but hope hereafter to see the accomplish-
ment of my prediction in their favour.*

Her daughters too this happy land shall grace
With powers of genius, as with charms of face ;
Blest with the softness of the female mind,
With fancy blooming, and with taste refin'd,
Some Rowe shall rise and wrest with daring pen,
The pride of genius from assuming men ;
While each bright line a polish'd beauty wears ;
For every Muse and every Grace are theirs.

THE PROGRESS OF
D U L N E S S &c.

[*Advice of the ladies to Harriet's mother concerning education ; address to parents ; Harriet's studies, skill in fashions, scandal and romances ; with the consequent occurrences of her life by way of illustration of the moral of the work.*]

“ C O M E hither, Harriet, pretty Miss,
Come hither ; give your aunt a kiss.
What, blushing ? fye, hold up your head,
Full six years old, and yet afraid !
With such a form, an air, a grace,
You're not asham'd to show your face !
Look like a Lady—bold—my Child—
Why, ma'am, your Harriet will be spoil'd,
What pity 'tis, a girl so sprightly
Should hang her head so unpolitely ?
And sure there's nothing worth a rush in
That odd, unnatural trick of blushing ;
It marks one ungentleely bred,
And shows she's mischief in her head,
I've heard Dick Hairbrain prove from Paul,
Eve never blush'd before the fall.
'Tis said indeed, in latter days,
It gain'd our grandmothers some praise ;
Perhaps it suited well enough
With hoop and fardingale and ruff ;
But this politer generation
Holds ruffs and blushes out of fashion.

And what can mean that gown so odd ?
You ought to dress her in the mode,

To teach her how to make a figure ;
Or she'll be awkward when she's bigger,
And look as queer as Joan of Nokes,
And never rig like other folks ;
Her clothes will trail, all fashion lost,
As if she hung them on a post,
And sit as awkwardly as Eve's
First peagreen petticoat of leaves.

And what can mean your simple whim here
To keep her poring on her primer ?
'Tis quite enough for girls to know,
If she can read a billet-deaux,
Or write a line you'd understand
Without an alphabet o'th'hand.
Why need she learn to write, or spell ?
A pothook scrawl is just as well ;
It ranks her with the better sort,
For 'tis the reigning mode at court.
And why shou'd girls be learn'd or wise ?
Books only serve to spoil their eyes.
The studious eye but faintly twinkles,
And reading paves the way to wrinkles.
In vain may learning fill the head full ;
'Tis beauty that's the one thing needful ;
Beauty, our sex's sole pretence,
The best receipt for female sense,
The charm, that turns all words to witty,
And makes the silliest speeches pretty.
Even folly borrows killing graces
From ruby lips and roseate faces.
Give airs and beauty to your daughter,
And sense and wit will follow after."

Thus round the infant Miss in state
The council of the ladies meet,
And gay in modern style and fashion
Prescribe their rules of education.
The mother, once herself a toast,
Prays for her child the self-same post ;
The father hates the toil and pother,
And leaves his daughters to their mother ;
A proper hand their youth to guide,
And o'er their studies to preside ;
From whom her faults, that never vary,
May come by right hereditary,
Follies be multiplied with quickness,
And whims keep up the family likeness.

Ye parents, shall those forms so fair,
The graces might be proud to wear,
The charms those speaking eyes display,
Where passion sits in ev'ry ray,
Th' expressive glance, the air refin'd
That sweet vivacity of mind,
Be doom'd for life to folly's sway,
By trifles lur'd, to fops a prey,
Blank all the pow'rs that nature gave,
To dress and tinsel show the slave !
Say, can ye think that charms so bright,
Were giv'n alone to please the sight,
Or like the moon, that forms so fine
Were made for nothing but to shine ?
With lips of rose and cheeks of cherry,
Out go the works of statuary ?
And gain the prize of show, as victors
O'er busts and effigies and pictures ?

Can female sense no trophies raise ?
Are dress and beauty all their praise ?
And does no lover hope to find
An angel in his charmer's mind ?
First from the dust our sex began,
But woman was refin'd from man ;
Receiv'd again, with softer air,
The great Creator's forming care.
And shall it no attention claim
Their beauteous infant souls to frame ?
Shall half your precepts tend the while
Fair nature's lovely work to spoil,
The native innocence deface,
The glowing blush, the modest grace,
On follies fix their young desire,
To trifles bid their souls aspire,
Fill their gay heads with whims of fashion,
And slight all other cultivation,
Let every useless, barren weed
Of foolish fancy run to seed,
And make their minds the receptacle
Of every thing that's false and fickle,
Where gay caprice with wanton air,
And vanity keep constant fair,
Where ribbands, laces, patches, puffs,
Caps, jewels, ruffles, tippets, muffs,
With gaudy whims of vain parade,
Croud each apartment of the head,
Where stands display'd with costly pains
The toyshop of coquettish brains,
And high-crown'd caps hang out the sign,
And, beaus as customers throng in ;
Whence sense is banish'd in disgrace,
Where wisdom dares not show her face,

Where calm reflection cannot live,
Nor thought sublime an hour survive ;
Where the light head and vacant brain
Spoil all ideas they contain,
As th' airpump kills in half a minute
Each living thing you put within it.

It must be so ; by antient rule
The fair are nurs'd in folly's school,
And all their education done
Is none at all, or worse than none ;
Whence still proceed in maid or wife,
The follies and the ills of life.
Learning is call'd our mental diet,
That serves the hungry mind to quiet,
That gives the genius fresh supplies,
Till souls grow up to common size :
But here, despising sense refin'd,
Gay trifles feed the youthful mind.
Chamæleons thus, whose colours airy
As often as coquettes can vary,
Despise all dishes rich and rare,
And diet wholly on the air ;
Think fogs blest eating, nothing finer,
And can on whirlwinds make a dinner ;
And thronging all to feast together,
Fare daintily in blustering weather.

Here to the fair alone remain
Long years of action spent in vain ;
In numbers little skill it shows
To cast the sum of all she knows.
Perhaps she learns (what can she less ?)
The arts of dancing and of dress.

But dress and dancing are to women,
Their education's mint and cummin ;
These lighter graces should be taught,
And weightier matters not forgot.
For there, where only these are shown,
The soul will fix on these alone.
Then most the fineries of dress,
Her thoughts, her wish and time possess ;
She values only to be gay,
And works to rig herself for play ;
Weaves scores of caps with diff'rent spires,
And all varieties of wires ;
Gay ruffles varying just as flow'd
The tides and ebbings of the mode ;
Bright flow'rs, and topknots waving high,
That float, like streamers in the sky !
Work'd catgut handkerchiefs, whose flaws
Display the neck, as well as gauze ;
Or network aprons somewhat thinnish,
That cost but six weeks time to finish,
And yet so neat, as you must own
You could not buy for half a crown——
Perhaps in youth (for country-fashions
Prescrib'd that mode of educations)
She wastes long months in still more tawdry,
And useless labours of embroid'ry ;
With toil weaves up for chairs together,
Six bottoms quite as good as leather ;
A set of curtains tap'stry work,
The figures frowning like the Turk ;
A tentstitch picture, work of folly,
With portraits wrought of Dick and Polly ;
A coat of arms, that mark'd her house,
Three owls rampant, the crest a goose :

Or shews in waxwork goodman Adam,
And serpent gay, gallanting madam,
A woefull mimickry of Eden,
With fruit, that needs not be forbidden :
All usefess works, that fill for beauties
Of time and sense their vast vacuities ;
Of sense, which reading might bestow,
And time, whose worth they never know.

Now to some pop'lous city sent,
She comes back prouder than she went ;
Few months in vain parade she spares,
Nor learns, but apes, politer airs ;
So formal acts, with such a set air,
That country-manners far were better.
This springs from want of just discerning,
As pedantry from want of learning ;
And proves this maxim true to fight,
The half-genteel are least polite.

Yet still that active spark, the mind
Employment constantly will find,
And when on trifles most 'tis bent,
Is always found most diligent ;
For weighty works men show most sloth in,
But labour hard at doing nothing,
A trade, that needs no deep concern,
Or long apprenticeship to learn,
To which mankind at first apply
As naturally as to cry,
Till at the last their latest groan
Proclaims their idleness is done.
Good sense, like fruits, is rais'd by toil ;
But follies sprout in ev'ry soil,

And where no tillage finds a place,
They grow, like tares, the more apace,
Nor culture, pains, nor planting need,
As moss and mushrooms have no seed.

Thus Harriet, rising on the stage,
Learns all the arts, that please the age,
And studies well, as fits her station,
The trade and politics of fashion :
A judge of modes in silks and fattens,
From tassels down to clogs and pattens ;
A genius, that can calculate
When modes of dress are out of date,
Cast the nativity with ease
Of gowns, and sacks and negligees,
And tell, exact to half a minute,
What's out of fashion and what's in it ;
And scanning all with curious eye,
Minuteft faults in dresses spy ;
(So in nice points of fight, a flea
Sees atoms better far than we,)
A patriot too, she greatly labours,
To spread her arts among her neighbours,
Holds correspondencies to learn
What facts the female world concern,
To gain authentic state-reports
Of varied modes in distant courts,
The present state and swift decays
Of tuckers, handkerchiefs and stays,
The colour'd silk that beauty wraps ;
And all the rise and fall of caps.
Then shines, a pattern to the fair,
Of mein, address and modish air,
Of ev'ry new, affected grace,
That plays the eye, or decks the face,

The artful smile, that beauty warms,
And all th'hypocrisy of charms.

On funday, see the haughty maid
In all the glare of dress array'd,
Deck'd in her most fantastic gown,
Because a stranger's come to town.
Heedless at church she spends the day
For homelier folks may serve to pray,
And for devotion those may go,
Who can have nothing else to do.
Beauties at church must spend their care in
Far other work, than pious hearing ;
They've beaus to conquer, bells to rival ;
To make them serious were uncivil.
For, like the preacher, they each funday
Must do their whole week's work in one day.

As tho' they meant to take by blows
Th' opposing galleries of beaus,
To church the female squadron move,
All arm'd with weapons us'd in love.
Like colour'd ensigns gay and fair,
High caps rise floating in the air ;
Bright silk its varied radiance flings,
And streamers wave in kissing-strings ;
Their darts and arrows are not seen ;
But lovers tell us what they mean,
Each bears th'artill'ry of her charms,
Like training bands at viewing arms.

So once, in fear of Indian beating,
Our grandfires bore their guns to meeting,
Each man equipp'd on funday morn,
With psalm-book, shot and powder-horn ;

And look'd in form, as all must grant,
Like th'antient, true church militant ;
Or fierce, like modern deep divines,
Who fight with quills, like porcupines.

Or let us turn the style and see
Our belles assembled o'er their tea ;
Where folly sweetens ev'ry theme,
And scandal serves for sugar'd cream.

“ And did you hear the news ? (they cry)
The court wear caps full three feet high,
Built gay with wire, and at the end on't,
Red tassels streaming like a pendant :
Well sure, it must be vastly pretty ;
'Tis all the fashion in the city.
And were you at the ball last night ?
Well Chloe look'd like any fright ;
Her day is over for a toast ;
She'd now do best to act a ghost.
You saw our Fanny ; envy must own
She figures, since she came from Boston,
Good company improves one's air —
I think the troops were station'd there.
Poor Cœlia ventur'd to the place ;
The small-pox quite has spoil'd her face.
A sad affair, we all confess :
But providence knows what is best.
Poor Dolly too, that writ the letter
Of love to Dick ; but Dick knew better ;
A secret that ; you'll not disclose it :
There's not a person living knows it.
Sylvia shone out, no peacock finer ;
I wonder what the fops see in her.

Perhaps 'tis true what Harry maintains,
She mends on intimate acquaintance."

Hail British lands ! to whom belongs
Untroubled privilege of tongues,
Blest gift of freedom, priz'd as rare
By all, but dearest to the fair ;
From grandmothers of loud renown,
Thro' long succession handed down,
Thence with affection kind and hearty,
Bequeath'd unlesse'd to poster'ty !
And all ye powers of slander, hail,
Who teach to censure and to rail !
By you, kind aids to prying eyes,
Minute'st faults the fair one spies,
And specks in rival toasts can mind,
Which no one else could ever find ;
By shrewdest hints and doubtful guesses,
Tears reputations all in pieces ;
Points out what smiles to sin advance,
Finds assignations in a glance ;
And shews how rival toasts (you'll think)
Break all commandments with a wink.

So priests drive poets to the lurch
By fulmination of the church,
Mark in our titlepage our crimes,
Find heresies in double rhymes,
Charge tropes with damnable opinion,
And prove a metaphor Arminian,
Peep for our doctrines, as at windows,
And pick out creeds of innuendoes:

And now the conversation sporting
From scandal turns to trying fortune.

Their future luck the fair foresee
In dreams, in cards, but most in tea.
Each finds of love some future trophy
In settlings left of tea, or coffee ;
There fate displays its book, she believes,
And lovers swim in form of tea-leaves ;
Where oblong stalks she takes for beaus,
And squares of leaves for billet-doux
Gay balls in parboil'd fragments rise,
And specks for kisses greet her eyes.

So Roman augurs wont to pry
In victims' hearts for prophecy,
Sought from the future world advices,
By lights and lungs of sacrifices,
And read with eyes more sharp than wizards'
The book of fate in pigeon's gizzards ;
Could tell what chief would be survivor,
From aspects of an ox's liver,
And cast what luck would fall in fights,
By trine and quartile of its lights.

Yet that we fairly may proceed,
We own that ladies sometimes read,
And grieve that reading is confin'd
To books that poison all the mind ;
The bluster of romance, that fills
The head brimfull of purling rills,
Inspires with dreams the witless maiden
On flow'ry vales, and fields Arcadian,
And swells the mind with hungry fancies,
And amorous follies of romances,
With whims that in no place exist,
But authors' heads and woman's breast.

For while she reads romance, the fair one
Fails not to think herself the heroine ;
For every glance, or smile, or grace,
She finds resemblance in her face,
Thinks while the fancied beauties strike,
Two peas were never more alike,
Expects the world to fall before her,
And every fop she meets adore her.
Thus Harriet reads, and reading really
Believes herself a young Pamela,
The high-wrought whim, the tender strain
Elate her mind and turn her brain :
Before her glass, with smiling grace,
She views the wonders of her face ;
There stands in admiration moveless,
And hopes a Grandison, or Lovelace.

Then shines she forth, and round her hovers
The powder'd swarm of bowing lovers ;
By flames of love attracted thither,
Fops, scholars, dunces, cits, together.
No lamp expos'd in nightly skies
E'er gather'd such a swarm of flies ;
Or flame in tube electric draws
Such thronging multitudes of straws.
(For I shall still take similes
From fire electric when I please.)

With vast confusion swells the sound,
When all the coxcombs flutter round.
What undulation wide of bows !
What gentle oaths and am'rous vows !
What doubl' entendres all so smart !
What sighs hot-piping from the heart !

What jealous leers ! what angry brawls
To gain the lady's hand at balls !
What billet-doux, brimful of flame !
Acrostics lin'd with Harriet's name !
What compliments o'er strain'd with telling
Sad lies of Venus and of Hellen !
What wits half-crack'd with common places
On angels, goddesses and graces !
On fires of love what witty puns ;
What similes of stars and suns !
What cringing, dancing, ogling, sighing,
What languishing for love, and dying !

For lovers of all things that breathe
Are most expos'd to sudden death,
And many a swain much fam'd in rhymes
Hath died some hundred thousand times :
Yet tho' love oft their breath may stifle,
'Tis sung it hurts them but a trifle.
The swain revives by equal wonder,
As snakes will join when cut asunder,
And often murther'd still survives ;
No cat hath half so many lives.

While round the fair, the coxcombs throng
With oaths, cards, billet-doux, and song,
She spread her charms and wish'd to gain
The heart of ev'ry simple swain ;
To all with gay, alluring air,
She hid in smiles the fatal snare,
For sure that snare must fatal prove,
Where falshood wears the form of love ;
Full oft with pleasing transport hung
On accents of each flattering tongue,

And found a pleasure most sincere
From each erect, attentive ear ;
For pride was hers, that oft with ease,
Despis'd the man she wish'd to please.
She lov'd the chace, but scorn'd the prey,
And fish'd for hearts to throw away ;
Joy'd at the tale of piercing darts,
And tortring flames and pining hearts,
And pleas'd perus'd the billet-doux,
That said, " I die for love of you ;"
Found conquest in each gallant's sighs
And blest the murders of her eyes.

So Doctors live but by the dead,
And pray for plagues, as daily bread ;
Thank providence for colds and fevers,
And hold consumptions special favors ;
And think diseases kindly made,
As blest materials of their trade.

'Twou'd weary all the pow'rs of verse
Their am'rous speeches to rehearse,
Their compliments, whose vain parade
Turns Venus to a kitchen-maid ;
With high pretence of love and honor,
They vent their folly all upon her,
(Ev'n as the scripture-precept saith,
More shall be given to him that hath ;)
Tell her how wondrous fair they deem her,
How handsome all the world esteem her ;
And while they flatter and adore,
She contradicts to call for more.

"And did they say I was so handsome ?
My looks—I'm sure no one can fancy 'em.

'Tis true we're all as we were fram'd,
And none have right to be asham'd ;
But as for beauty — all can tell
I never fancied I look'd well ;
I were a fright, had I a grain less.
You're only joking, Mr. Brainless.'

Yet beauty still maintain'd her sway ;
And bade the proudest hearts obey ;
Ev'n sense her glances could beguile,
And vanquish'd wisdom with a smile,
While merit bow'd and found no arms,
To oppose the conquests of her charms,
Caught all those bashful fears, that place,
The mask of folly on the face,
That awe, that robs our airs of ease,
And blunders, when it hopes to please !
For men of sense will always prove
The most forlorn of fools in love.
The fair esteem'd, admir'd, 'tis true,
And prais'd — 'tis all coquettes can do.

And when deserving lovers came,
Believ'd her smiles and own'd their flame,
Her bosom thrill'd, with joy affected
To increase the list, she had rejected ;
While pleas'd to see her arts prevail,
To each she told the self-same tale.
She wish'd in truth they ne'er had seen her,
And feign'd what grief it oft had given her,
And sad, of tender-hearted make,
Griev'd they were ruin'd for her sake.
'Twas true, she own'd on recollection,
She'd given them proofs of kind affection :

But they mistook her whole intent,
 For friendship was the thing she meant.
 She wonder'd how their hearts could move 'em
 So strangely as to think she'd love 'em ;
 She thought her purity above
 The low and sensual flames of love ;
 And yet they made such sad ado,
 She wish'd she could have lov'd them too.
 She pitied them, and as a friend
 She priz'd them more than all mankind ;
 And begg'd them not their hearts to vex,
 Or hang themselves, or break their necks ;
 Told them 'twould make her life uneasy,
 If they should run forlorn, or crazy :
 Objects of love she could not deem 'em ;
 But did most marv'lously esteem 'em.

For 'tis esteem, coquettes dispense
 Tow'rd learning, genius, worth and sense,
 Sincere affection, truth refin'd,
 And all the merit of the mind.

But love's the passion they experience
 For gold, and dress, and gay appearance.

For ah ! what magic charms and graces
 Are found in golden suits of laces !
 What going forth of hearts and souls
 Tow'rd glares of gilded button holes !
 What lady's heart can stand its ground
 'Gainst hats with glittering edging bound ?
 While vests and shoes and hose conspire,
 And gloves and ruffles fan the fire :
 And broadcloths, cut by tailor's arts,
 Spread fatal nets for female hearts.

And oh, what charms more potent shine,
 Drawn from the dark Peruvian mine !
 What spells and talismans of Venus
 Are found in dollars, crowns and guineas !
 In purse of gold, a single stiver
 Beats all the darts in Cupid's quiver.
 What heart so constant, but must veer,
 When drawn by thousand pounds a year !
 How many fair ones ev'ry day
 To houses fine have fall'n a prey,
 Been forc'd on stores of goods to fix,
 Or carried off in coach and fix !
 For Cælia, merit found no dart ;
 Five thousand sterling broke her heart,
 So witches, hunters say confound 'em,
 For silver bullets only wound 'em.

Cupid of old, as poets say,
 But barter'd hearts in simple way ;
 Our modern Cupids wiser found,
 And go to work on surer ground,
 Like lawyers join the monied faction,
 Think gold the surest cause of action,
 But where of money not a copper is,
 Reject all suits *in forma pauperis* ;
 Admit the rich to blifs and glory,
 And send the poor to purgatory.

And now the time was come, our fair
 Should all the plagues of passion share,
 And after ev'ry heart she'd won,
 By sad disaster lose her own.
 So true the ancient proverb sayeth,
 'Edg'd tools are dang'rous things to play with.'

The fisher, ev'ry gudgeon hooking,
May chance himself to catch a ducking ;
The child that plays with fire, in pain
Will burn its fingers now and then,
And from the Dutchess to the laundress,
Coquettes are seldom salamanders.

For lo ! Dick Hairbrain heaves in sight,
From foreign climes returning bright,
A coxcomb, past all mortal matching ,
Well worth a lady's pains in catching ;
He danc'd, he sung to admiration ;
He swore to gen'ral acceptance ;
In airs and dress so great his merit,
He shone—no lady's eyes could bear it.
Poor Harriet saw ; her heart was stouter ;
She gather'd all her smiles about her ;
Hop'd by her eyes to gain the laurels,
And charm him down, as snakes do squirrels ;
So priz'd his love and wish'd to win it,
That all her hopes were center'd in it ;
And took such pains his heart to move,
Herself fell desp'rately in love ;
Nor had the art to keep it private,
Dick soon found what she meant to drive at.
Tho' great her skill in am'rous tricks,
She could not hope to equal Dick's :
Her fate she ventur'd on his trial,
And lost her birthright of denial.

And here her brightest hopes miscarry ;
For Dick was too gallant to marry :
He own'd she'd charms for those who need'em,
But he, be sure, was all for freedom ;

So, left in hopeless flames to burn,
Gay Dick esteem'd her in her turn.

In love, a lady once given over,
Is never fated to recover,
Doom'd to indulge her troubled fancies,
And feed her passion by romances ;
And always am'rous, always changing,
From coxcomb still to coxcomb ranging,
Finds in her heart a void, which still
Succeeding beaus can never fill :
As shadows vary o'er a glass,
Each holds in turn the vacant place ;
She doats upon her earliest pain,
And following thousands, loves in vain.

Poor Harriet now hath had her day ;
No more the beaus confess her sway ;
New beauties push her from the stage ;
She trembles at th'approach of age,
And starts to view the alter'd face,
That wrinkles at her in her glass :
So Satan, in the monk's tradition,
Fear'd, when he met his apparition.

At length her name each coxcomb cancels
From standing lists of toasts and angels ;
And slighted where she shone before,
A grace and goddess now no more,
Depriv'd of long-accustom'd pleasure
In daily falsehoods told to praise her ;
Despit'd by all, and doom'd to meet
Her lovers at her rival's feet,
She flies assemblies, shuns the ball,
And cries out, vanity, on all ;

Affects to scorn the tinsel-shows
Of glittering belles and gaudy beaux ;
Nor longer hopes to hide by dress
The tracks of age upon her face.
Now careless grown of airs polite,
Her noonday nightcap meets the sight ;
Her hair uncomb'd collects together,
With ornaments of many a feather ;
Her stays for easiness thrown by,
Her rumpled handkerchief awry,
A careless figure half undrest,
(The reader's wits may guess the rest)
All points of dress and neatness carried,
As tho' she'd been a twelvemonth married ;
She spends her breath, as years prevail,
At this sad, wicked world to rail,
To slander all her sex *impromptu*,
And wonder what the times will come to.

Tom Brainless at the close of last year
Had been six years a rev'rend Pastor,
And now resolv'd to smooth his life,
To seek the blessing of a wife.
His brethren saw his am'rous temper,
And recommended fair Miss Simper,
Who fond, they heard, of sacred truth,
Had left her levities of youth,
Grown fit for th' ministerial union,
And grave, as christian's wife in Bunyan.

On this he rigg'd him in his best,
And got his old grey wig new-drest,
Fix'd on his suit of sable stuffs,
And brush'd the powder from the cuffs,

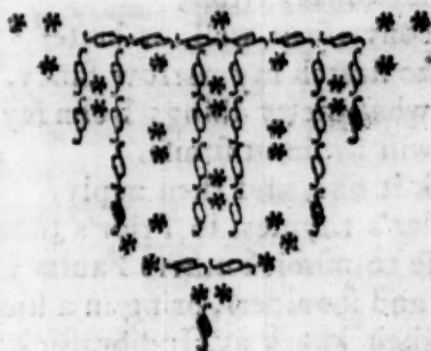
With black filk stockings, yet in being,
The same he took his first degree in ;
Procur'd a horse of breed from Europe,
And learn'd to mount him by the stirrup,
And set forth fierce to court the maid ;
His white hair'd Deacon went for aid ;
And on the right in solemn mode,
The Reverend Mr. Brainless rode.
Thus grave, the courtly pair advance,
Like knight and squire in fam'd romance ;
The priest then bow'd in sober gesture,
And all in scripture terms address'd her :
He'd found for reasons amply known,
It was not good to be alone,
And thought his duty led to trying
The great command of multiplying ;
So with submission, by her leave,
He'd come to look him out an Eve,
And hop'd, in pilgrimage of life,
To find an helpmeet in a wife,
A wife discreet and fair withal,
To make amends for Adam's fall.

In short, the bargain finish'd soon,
A reverend Doctor made them one.

And now the joyful people rouse all
To celebrate their priest's espousal ;
And first, by kind agreement set,
In case their priest a wife could get,
The parish vote him five pounds clear,
T' increase his salary every year.
Then swift the tagrag gentry come
To welcome Madam Brainless home ;

With their good Parson joy ; with pride
In order round salute the bride ;
And home, at visits and at meetings,
To Madam all allow precedence :
Greet her at church with rev'rence due,
And next the pulpit fix her pew.—

FINIS.



A LETTER from CAMBRIDGE.

THO' plagu'd with Algebraic lectures,
And astronomical conjectures ;
Wean'd from the sweets of poetry,
To scraps of dry philosophy :
You see, dear Hal, I've found a time,
T' express my thoughts to you in rhyme ;
For why, you'll say, should distant parts,
Or time disjoin, united hearts ;
Since, tho,' by intervening space,
Depriv'd of speaking face face,
By faithful emissary letter,
We may converse as well, or better :
And not to stretch my narrow fancy,
To shew what pretty things I can say :
As some will strain at simile,
First work it fine, and then apply,
Add Butler's rhymes, to Prior's thoughts,
And chuse to mimick others Faults ;
By head and shoulders, bring in a stick,
To shew their knack at Hudibrastick.
I'll tell you, as a friend and Crony,
How here I spent my time and money.
No more, majestick Virgil's heights,
Nor Milton's tow'ring lofty flights ;
Nor courtly Horace's rebukes,
Who banters vice, with friendly jokes ;
Nor Congreve's life, nor Cowley's fire ;
Nor all the beauties that conspire,
To fix the greenest Bays upon
Th' immortal brows of Addison :
Prior's inimitable lays,
Nor Pope's harmonious numbers please,

How can poetick flow'rs abound?
How spring, in philosophick ground?
Homer, indeed, if I would shew it,
Was both philosopher, and poet.:
But tedious philosophick chapters,
Quite like my poetick raptures;
And I to Phebus bid adieu,
When first I took my leave of you.
Now algebra, and Geometry,
Arithmetick, astronomy,
Optics, chronology and staticks,
All tiresome parts of mathematicks,
With twenty harder names than these,
Disturb my rest, and break my peace;
All seeming inconsistencies,
Are nicely solv'd by A's and B's.
Our senses are disprov'd, by prisms,
Our arguments by syllogisms:
If I should confidently write,
This ink is black, this paper's white;
They'd contradict it, and perplex one,
With motion, light, and its reflection;
And solve th' apparent falshood by
The curious structure of the eye.
Shou'd you the poker want, and take it
When it looks red, as fire can make it,
And burn your fingers, and your coat,
They'd flatly tell you, 'twas not hot.
The fire, they say, has in't, 'tis true,
A pow'r of causing heat in you;
But no more heat, in fire that heats you,
Than there is pain, in stick that beats you:
And thus philosophers expound
The names of odour, taste, and sound.

That wine, and verjuice, Grape and dung
Affect the fibres of the tongue.
Carnations, violets, and roses,
Raife a sensation in our noses :
But that there's none of us can tell,
That these have taste, or those have smell,
That when melodious Mason sings,
Or Gat'ring tunes the trembling strings ;
Or when the trumpet's brisk alarms,
Call forth the cheerful youth to arms ;
Convey'd thro' undulating air,
The musick's only in the ear.
We're told how planets roll on high,
How large their orbits, and how nigh :
I hope in little time to know,
Whether the moon's a cheese or no,
Whether the man in't, as some tell you,
With beef and pudding stuffs his belly,
Why like a lunatick confin'd,
He lives at distance from mankind :
When, at one resolute attack,
Might whirl his prison off his back ;
Or like a maggot in a nut,
Full bravely, eat his passage out.
But feuds and tumults in the nation,
Distract such curious speculation.
Cambridge, from furious broils of late,
Foresees her near approaching fate.
Her firmest patriots are remov'd,
And her triumphant foes approv'd.
No more : this due from friendship take,
Nor barely writ for writing sake.